

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

House Meets At...	Votes Predicted At...
9:00 a.m. For Morning Hour 10:00 a.m. For Legislative Business Fifteen "One-minutes" Per Side	Last Vote: 6:00 p.m.

Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.

Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **H. Res. 1252 –Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 6003 – Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (Rep. Matsui-Rules):** The structured rule provides one hour of general debate, with one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Matsui, and consideration will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on a Democratic Motion ordering the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
 - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
- **Suspension Bills:** Today, the House will consider several bills on the Suspension calendar. Bills considered on the Suspension calendar are debatable for 40 minutes; may not be amended; and require a two-thirds vote for passage. If a recorded vote is requested, it will be postponed.
 - 1) H.R. 6028** - Merida Initiative to Combat Illicit Narcotics and Reduce Organized Crime Authorization Act of 2008 (Berman – Foreign Affairs)
 - 2) H.Res. 1063** – Marking the 225th anniversary of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, which ended the Revolutionary War with the Kingdom of Great Britain and recognized the independence of the United States of America, and acknowledging the shared values and close friendship between the peoples and governments of the United States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Rep. Wu – Foreign Affairs)
 - 3) H.Con.Res. 318** – Supporting the goals and ideals of the International Year of Sanitation (Rep. Payne – Foreign Affairs)

- 4) **H.Con.Res. 332** – Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Rep. Fortenberry – Foreign Affairs)
- 5) **H.Con.Res. 337** – Honoring the Seeds of Peace for its 15th anniversary as an organization (Rep. Allen – Foreign Affairs)
- 6) **H.Con.Res. 336** - Honoring the sacrifices and contributions made by disabled American veterans (Rep. Altmire – Veterans' Affairs)
- 7) **H.Res. 1235** - Expressing support for the designation of National D-Day Remembrance Day, and recognizing the spirit, courage, and sacrifice of the men and women who fought and won World War II (Rep. Scalise – Veterans' Affairs)
- 8) **H.Res. 1010** - Recognizing the importance of manufactured housing in the United States (Rep. Donnelly – Financial Services)
- 9) **S. 682** - Edward William Brooke III Congressional Gold Medal Act (Sen. Kennedy – Financial Services)
- 10) **H.Res. 1145** - Recognizing the 100 year anniversary of the establishment of St. Mary's Cooperative Credit Association, the "Bank of the People", and the birth of the American credit union (Rep. Shea – Porter – Financial Services)
- 11) **S. 254** - To award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi (Sen. Enzi – Financial Services)
- 12) **H.R. 3229** - National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center Commemorative Coin Act (Rep. Westmoreland– Financial Services)
- 13) **H.R. 2268** - Mother's Day Centennial Commemorative Coin Act (Rep. Capito – Financial Services)
- 14) **H.R. 1553** - Conquer Childhood Cancer Act of 2007 (Rep. Pryce - Energy and Commerce)
- 15) **H.Res. 977** - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that rebate checks would better stimulate the economy if spent on American-made products and services from American-owned companies (Rep. Braley - Energy and Commerce)
- 16) **S. 2146** - To authorize EPA to accept, as part of a settlement, diesel emission reduction Supplemental Environmental Projects. (Sen. Carper - Energy and Commerce)
- 17) **H.Res. 1236** - Expressing the sympathy of the House of Representatives to the citizens of Black Hawk, Buchanan, Butler, and Delaware Counties, Iowa, who were victims of the devastating tornado that struck their communities on May 25, 2008 (Rep. Braley – Transportation and Infrastructure)
- **H.R. 6003 – Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (Rep. Oberstar-Transportation and Infrastructure):** Debate on the rule will be managed by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Rep. James Oberstar, or his designee, and will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the bill.
 - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on final passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on passage of the bill.**

Bill Summary and Key Issues

H.R. 6003 – PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008 *(Rep. Oberstar – Transportation and Infrastructure)*

Major provisions of H.R. 6003

Increases Capital and Operating Grants to Amtrak. The bill authorizes \$4.2 billion (an average of \$840 million per year) to Amtrak for capital grants and \$3.0 billion (an average of \$606 million per year) for operating grants. Past inconsistent Federal support has hampered Amtrak's ability to replace catenaries, passenger cars, bridges, ties, and other equipment necessary for Amtrak to provide service. These capital grants will help Amtrak bring the Northeast Corridor to a state-of-good-repair, procure new rolling stock, rehabilitate existing bridges, as well as make additional capital improvements and maintenance over its entire network. In addition, the operating grants authorized under the bill will help Amtrak pay salaries, health costs, overtime pay, fuel costs, facilities, and train maintenance and operations. These operating grants will also ensure that Amtrak can meet its obligations under its recently negotiated labor contract.

Develops State Passenger Corridors. In an effort to encourage the development of new and improved intercity passenger rail services, the bill creates a new State Capital Grant program for intercity passenger rail capital projects, and based on the New Starts transit capital program administered by the Federal Transit Administration. The bill provides \$2.5 billion (\$500 million per year) for grants to States to pay for the capital costs of facilities and equipment necessary to provide new or improved intercity passenger rail. The Federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Secretary of Transportation would award these grants on a competitive basis for projects based on economic performance, expected ridership, and other factors.

Provides Funding for High-Speed Rail Corridors. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, established to develop a national transportation vision to address surface transportation needs for the next 50 years, recommends that the United States establish a high-speed rail network that spans the entire country. The bill authorizes \$1.75 billion (\$350 million per year) for grants to States and/or Amtrak to finance the construction and equipment for 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors. The Federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Secretary of Transportation would award these grants on a competitive basis for projects based on economic performance, expected ridership, and other factors.

Alleviates Rail "Choke Points." Many of Amtrak's service routes outside the Northeast Corridor suffer from poor service reliability and on-time performance because of freight traffic congestion. This congestion prevents Amtrak from retaining and attracting new ridership, and increases Amtrak's operating costs. The Department of Transportation Inspector General recently reported that if Amtrak achieved an 85 percent on-time performance outside the Northeast Corridor in fiscal year 2006, it would have saved Amtrak \$136.6 million, or almost one-third of its operating budget. Amtrak is required by law to have preferred

access on freight corridors; however, freight railroads do not always comply with Amtrak's access rights. The bill addresses this problem by providing congestion grants to Amtrak and the States for high-priority rail corridors in order to reduce congestion and facilitate ridership growth.

Reduces Amtrak's Debt. Federal support of Amtrak was cut drastically in fiscal year 2000 and 2001, forcing Amtrak to assume a large amount of debt to stay in operation. Amtrak has aggressively targeted this debt, paying down \$600 million from 2002 through 2007. Our bill helps Amtrak to take further steps to reduce its debt, authorizing \$345 million each year for debt service through FY2013. This funding will allow Amtrak to focus its resources on improving existing services and making additional capital and operational improvements.

Establishes an RFP for High-Speed Rail Service. A provision of H.R. 6003 directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue a request for proposals for projects for the financing, design, construction, and operation of an initial high-speed rail system operating between Washington, DC, and New York City. Proposals would need to meet certain financial, labor, and planning criteria, as well as a detailed description to account for any impacts on existing passenger, commuter, and freight rail traffic to be considered. If the Secretary receives a qualifying proposal, she would be directed to form a Commission to study any proposals received. Finally, the Secretary would issue a report to the Congress on the Commission's findings. Any further action on a proposal would need legislative approval by Congress.

Resolves Disputes between Commuter and Freight Railroads. Currently, no Federal guidelines exist to mediate disputes between commuter rail providers and freight railroads over use of freight rail tracks or rights-of-way, nor is there a standard forum for negotiating commuter rail operating agreements. The bill establishes a forum at the STB to help complete stalled commuter rail negotiations, helping our rail network operate as efficiently as possible. This section is identical to what was included in H.R. 2701, the "Transportation Energy Security and Climate Change Mitigation Act of 2007", as ordered reported by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on June 20, 2007.

1. Oberstar (MN): Manager's Amendment. Would provide that none of the funds may be used to employ workers in violation of section 274A of the Immigration and Nationality Act; and requires the Secretary of Transportation to conduct a study on ways to streamline compliance with National Historic Preservation Act requirements for federally funded railroad infrastructure projects. It also contains provisions regarding the Northeast Corridor. It requires studies regarding the expansion of the South Central High-Speed Rail Corridor to Memphis and to far south Texas. It requires proposals for building station stops for the proposed high-speed rail system in the Northeast Corridor. It also would authorize intercity passenger rail grants to be used for bicycle access into rolling stock and would provide bicycle racks in trains. Finally, it makes technical corrections to the bill. (30 minutes)

2. Davis, Tom (VA)/Van Hollen (MD)/Hoyer (MD): Would authorize the Transportation Secretary to make grants to the Washington Metropolitan Area

Transit Authority to finance in part the capital and preventive maintenance projects included in the Capital Improvement Program approved by the Board of Directors of the Transit Authority. It would prohibit funds to the Transit Authority unless the Authority ensures its rail customers have access to any services provided by any licensed wireless provider that notifies the Authority of its intent to offer services to the public. (10 minutes)

3. Smith, Adam (WA): Would require Amtrak to engage in good faith discussions, with commuter rail entities and public transportation authorities operating on the same trackage owned by a rail carrier as Amtrak, with respect to routing and timing of trains to efficiently move a maximal number of commuters, intercity, and passenger rail passengers, particularly during peak times of commuter usage. It also would require such discussion with respect to the expansion and enhancement of commuter rail and regional rail public transportation service. (10 minutes)

4. Sessions (TX): Would prohibit funds from being used for the long distance Amtrak route with the highest cost per seat/mile according to Amtrak's March 2008 monthly performance report unless the Secretary has transmitted a waiver for this route or a portion of it because the Secretary considers it critical to homeland security. (10 minutes)

5. McCarthy (NY): Would add to the passenger rail system comparison study a request to study train horn technology, with an emphasis on reducing train horn noise and its effect on local communities. (10 minutes)

6. Flake (AZ): Would remove section 104 of the bill (Baltimore tunnel project). (10 minutes)

7. Murphy, Christopher (CT): Would express support for commuter rail service between New Haven, CT, and Springfield, MA. It would encourage Amtrak to cooperate with state Departments of Transportation to expand commuter rail service on that line. Amtrak shall report to Congress and the Transportation Departments of Connecticut and Massachusetts on the total cost of uncompleted infrastructure maintenance on the rail line between New Haven and Springfield. (10 minutes)

8. Murphy, Patrick (PA)/Schwartz (PA)/Holt (NJ): Would require Amtrak, within one year of enactment, to report to Congress on the results of an evaluation of passenger rail between Cornwells Heights, PA, and New York City, NY, and between Princeton Junction, NJ, and New York City, NY, to determine whether to expand passenger rail service by increasing the frequency of stops or reducing commuter ticket prices for this route. (10 minutes)

Quote of the Day

"It is one of the characteristics of a free and democratic modern nation that it have free and independent labor unions" -Franklin D. Roosevelt